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Papillon: The butterfly effect of magnificent food

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IRS whistleblowers airing claims to Congress about 'slow-walking' of the Hunter Biden case

By FARNOUSH AMIRI
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Republicans raised unsubstantiated allegations Wednesday against President Joe Biden over his family's finances as they summoned IRS whistleblowers to testify publicly for the first time about claims the Justice Department improperly interfered with a tax investigation into Biden's son Hunter. Lawmakers were hearing from the two IRS agents assigned to Hunter Biden case, which looked into his failure to pay taxes. Greg Shapley is a supervisory special agent managing large cases for the IRS.

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House Oversight and Accountability Committee Chair James Comer, R-Ky., left, and House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Jason Smith, R-Mo., make opening statements as Republicans charge the Justice Department interfered with a yearslong investigation into Hunter Biden, during a hearing at the Capitol in Washington, Wednesday, July 19, 2023.

Associated Press

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IRS whistleblowers airing claims to Congress about 'slow-walking' of the Hunter Biden case

Continued from Front

The second agent, whose name was withheld in closed-door interview transcripts released earlier by Republicans and who was referred to by the committee as "whistleblower X," was disclosed at the hearing as Joe Ziegler, an IRS agent since 2010.

"We will continue to follow the money trail," said Rep. James Comer, chairman of the House Oversight and Accountability Committee, as he opened the session. The Justice Department has denied the whistleblowers' allegations.

The top Democrat on the committee, Maryland Rep. Jamie Raskin, called the hearing "a theater of the absurd."

The GOP inquiry got underway last month, days after the announcement that Hunter Biden would plead guilty to misdemeanor tax offenses as part of an agreement with federal prosecutors.

The IRS employees claim there was a pattern of "slow-walking investigative steps" into Hunter Biden, including delayed enforcement actions in the months before the 2020 election that Joe Biden won.

The House Ways and Means Committee recently



IRS Supervisory Special Agent Gary Shapley, left, and IRS Criminal Investigator Joseph Ziegler, are sworn in at a House Oversight and Accountability Committee hearing with IRS whistleblowers, Wednesday, July 19, 2023, in Washington.

Associated Press

voted to disclose hundreds of pages of testimony from the IRS employees in which they described roadblocks faced by agents on the case.

One of Shapley's most explosive claims was that U.S. Attorney David Weiss in Delaware, the federal prosecutor who led the investigation, asked for special counsel status in order to bring the tax cases against Hunter Biden in jurisdictions outside Delaware, including the District of Columbia and California, but was denied.

Weiss and the Justice Department have denied that, saying he had "full authority" and never sought to bring charges in other

states.

But Shapley testified under questioning during an exchange with Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, that he wrote an email later that day to memorialize the October 2022 meeting with Weiss and five others. Shapley insisted on Wednesday on his own recollection of what was said.

The second IRS whistleblower, Ziegler, described his frustrations with the way the case was handled, dating to the Trump administration under Attorney General William Barr. The tax agency employee said he started the investigation into Hunter Biden in 2015 and began to delve deeply into his life and finances.

Ziegler told the committee that he decided to come forward publicly "not as a hero or a victim," but as a married, gay Democrat "compelled to disclose the truth."

Democrats on the committee pushed back on the whistleblower claims that Hunter Biden received special treatment because his father was the nominee for president in the upcoming 2020 election.

Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi, D-Ill., made the point that Donald Trump was president during the 2020 time frame when the whistleblowers allege there was interference.

Trump's Justice Department, he noted, issued a memorandum in February 2020 telling prosecutors to "exercise particular care regarding sensitive investigations and prosecutions that relate to political candidates, campaigns and other politically sensitive individuals and organizations," his voice rising. "Especially in an election year!"

Democrats have pointed out that Weiss was appointed to his post by Trump and the federal investigation into Hunter Biden was initiated under Trump. Biden kept Weiss on the case when he won the election.

Republicans have also sought testimony from other agents involved in the case, and held a transcribed interview this week with an FBI agent, now retired, who they said was involved. But other witnesses have declined to appear before the panel.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre, speaking while the hearing was underway, said Republicans were focusing on "political stunts" and the president "on how we continue to do the work of the American people."

Before the hearing, Comer, R-Ky., acknowledged it has been difficult for Republicans to succinctly outline Hunter Biden's tangled financial affairs or to provide convincing evidence of any specific wrongdoing by the president or his family.

"It's so hard to explain," Comer told reporters. "Hopefully these IRS agents can do a better job explaining than I can," he said.

Justice Department officials have countered these claims by pointing to the extraordinary set of circumstances surrounding a criminal case into a subject who at the time was the son of a leading presidential candidate. □



El Salvador's President Mauricio Funes listens to a question during a joint news conference, in Guatemala City, Feb. 13, 2012.

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The State Department announced Wednesday it was imposing sanctions on two former Salvadoran

presidents and dozens of other officials and judges in Central America.

The report said that those sanctioned "have know-

State Department sanctions dozens of officials in Central America

ingly engaged in actions that undermine democratic processes or institutions, significant corruption or obstruction of investigations" into corruption in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

The extensive list, which also includes heads of banks, judges and high ranking officials, underscores the depth of corruption across the region. Chief among the names on the list was Mauricio Funes, president of El Salvador between 2009 and 2014 who was recently sentenced to prison for 14 years for negotiating

with the gangs and six years for tax evasion. Funes' successor, former president Salvador Sánchez Cerén, was also sanctioned for "significant corruption by laundering money" while he held the position as vice president. Corruption has been a hot button issue in Central America for years, fueling distrust in institutions and regularly cited as one of the root causes of migration to the United States, something President Joe Biden has sought to stem. It has become a key talking point in Guatemala's current tumultuous elec-

tion cycle as the political establishment attempts to quash competition, and it frequents the discourse of populist El Salvador President Nayib Bukele, who has adopted the catchphrase "there's enough money when no one steals it."

Despite accusations by the Biden administration that Bukele also negotiated with gangs, and civil society raising alarms that the millennial leader has been taking steps that eat away at the country's democracy, Bukele's name was not on the list of those sanctioned. □

Border Patrol fails to assess medical needs for children with preexisting conditions, report says

By LISET CRUZ and VALERIE GONZALEZ

Associated Press

Border Patrol does not have protocols for assessing medical needs of children with preexisting conditions, according to an independent report made public Tuesday on the death of an 8-year-old girl from Panama who was in federal custody.

The girl's death was "a preventable tragedy that resulted from" failures in "medical and custodial systems for children" within U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the agency that includes the Border Patrol, the report found.

It's the latest damning finding in the May 17 death of Anadith Danay Reyes Alvarez, who was on her ninth day in custody with family in Harlingen, Texas, in the Rio Grande Valley, one of the busiest corridors for migrant crossings. She had a chronic heart condition and sickle cell anemia.

An internal investigation found Border Patrol medical staff declined to review the girl's file.

The report made public Tuesday was conducted



Migrants wait in line adjacent to the border fence under the watch of the Texas National Guard to enter into El Paso, Texas, May 10, 2023.

by an independent monitor working to enforce compliance with the latest terms of the Flores settlement agreement, a measure created to bring child welfare protections to children in immigration custody.

"The failure to consult a physician or a local health facility for more extensive testing raises fundamental concerns regarding the ability of the CBP medical system to care appropriately for children at elevat-

ed medical risk," the report says.

New leadership has been appointed to the agency's Office of the Chief Medical Officer, said Troy A. Miller, acting CBP commissioner.

The agency "has undertaken significant steps to address deficiencies identified by the ongoing investigation, as well as to ensure that medically fragile individuals and family units receive the best possible care and spend the minimum

amount of time possible in CBP custody," Miller said. Mabel Alvarez Benedicks, the girl's mother, told The Associated Press she reported her daughter's condition to officials when she and her family were being processed at the border, but officials failed to notify other staff at the time the family was taken to a second facility designated for families, a problem the monitor highlighted in a previous report to the court.

Associated Press

Six days later, the girl tested positive for influenza and had a temperature of 101.8 F (38.78 C), according to the report.

She was given medication, put into isolation with her family but three days later, the girl and her mother made numerous visits to the medical unit, the report said.

Anadith reported vomiting and then a stomachache to the health provider, who failed to contact an on-call physician, the report showed. There is no protocol that highlights when an on-call physician should be contacted.

Alvarez begged officials to call an ambulance in order to hospitalize Anadith as her daughter felt pain in her bones, struggled to breathe and was unable to walk, but the health provider did not consider transferring the girl to a hospital, according to the report.

After Alvarez carried her daughter to the medical unit as she seized and became unresponsive, the girl was then taken to a hospital where she was pronounced dead, the report said. □

Jill Biden welcomes proposal for Medicare to pay for navigation services

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — First lady Jill Biden on Wednesday welcomed a new proposal to have Medicare pay for navigation services for cancer patients, saying it will make "an enormous difference in people's lives."

She joined other Biden administration officials on a conference call to discuss a proposal by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to pay for "principal illness navigation services," which help patients make decisions about treatment for cancer and other serious ill-

nesses and overcome barriers to quality care.

Biden spoke about her sister Jan, who underwent six weeks of stem cell transplant therapy several years ago to treat lymphoma. Biden said an advocate helped her sister "every step of the way."

She said making these services more widely available is something that she and her husband, Joe Biden, worked on before he was elected president and then made a priority after he took office.

The first lady frequently visits cancer centers around the United States as part of a Biden administra-

tion initiative called the Cancer Moonshot, which has a goal of preventing more than 4 million cancer deaths by 2047 and improving the experience of people affected by the disease, including patients.

"Since we began this work, I've consistently heard one thing: these navigation programs are so successful, but since they aren't generally paid for, most medical practices can't afford to provide them," Biden said.

The Bidens also lost a son, Beau, to brain cancer in 2015.

If finalized, the proposed rule would allow Medicare



First Lady Jill Biden speaks in front construction of a new terminal at Pittsburgh International Airport with Acting Labor Secretary Julie Su, left, and Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, in Pittsburgh, Tuesday, July 18, 2023.

Associated Press

to pay for navigation services. The change would take effect on Jan. 1. Members of the public will have until Sept. 11 to comment on the rule.

"This is a first step. And we

hope that the private sector will do its part as well," the first lady said.

"We know that these services make an enormous difference in people's lives." □

Ex-officer to ask Supreme Court to review his conviction in murder of George Floyd

By **STEVE KARNOWSKI**

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Former Minneapolis police Officer Derek Chauvin will ask the U.S. Supreme Court to review his conviction for second-degree murder in the killing of George Floyd, now that the Minnesota Supreme Court has declined to hear the case, his attorney said Wednesday.

The state's highest court without comment denied Chauvin's petition in a one-page order dated Tuesday, letting Chauvin's conviction and 22 1/2-year sentence stand. Chauvin faces long odds at the U.S. Supreme Court, which hears only about 100 to 150 appeals of the more than 7,000 cases it is asked to review every year.

Floyd, who was Black, died on May 25, 2020, after Chauvin, who is white, pressed a knee on his neck for 9 1/2 minutes on the street outside a convenience store where Floyd tried to pass a counterfeit \$20 bill. A bystander video captured Floyd's fading cries of "I can't breathe."



In this image taken from video, former Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin addresses the court at the Hennepin County Courthouse, June 25, 2021, in Minneapolis.

Associated Press

Floyd's death touched off protests worldwide, some of which turned violent, and forced a national reckoning with police brutality and racism that is still playing out.

Chauvin's attorney, William Mohrmann, told The Associated Press that they were

"obviously disappointed" in the decision. He said the most significant issue on which they appealed was whether holding the proceedings in Minneapolis in 2021 deprived Chauvin of his right to a fair trial due to pretrial publicity and concerns for violence in the

event of an acquittal. He said they will now raise that issue with the U.S. Supreme Court.

"This criminal trial generated the most amount of pretrial publicity in history," Mohrmann said. "More concerning are the riots which occurred af-

ter George Floyd's death (and) led the jurors to all express concerns for their safety in the event they acquitted Mr. Chauvin safety concerns which were fully evidenced by surrounding the courthouse in barbed wire and National Guard troops during the trial and deploying the National Guard throughout Minneapolis prior to jury deliberations."

Mohrmann asked the Minnesota Supreme Court in May to hear the case after the Minnesota Court of Appeals in April rejected his arguments that he had been denied a fair trial. The Minnesota attorney general's office, in a response last month, asked the Supreme Court to let that ruling stand instead.

"Petitioner received a fair trial, and received the benefit of a fulsome appellate review," prosecutors wrote at the time. "It is time to bring this case to a close." The attorney general's office did not immediately reply to a request for comment Wednesday. □

Injunction blocking Florida law targeting drag shows applies to all venues, judge says

By **MIKE SCHNEIDER**

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — A federal judge said Wednesday that his order blocking a Florida law targeting drag shows doesn't just apply to the restaurant that brought the lawsuit challenging it but to other venues in the state, reiterating that the legislation championed by Gov. Ron DeSantis is likely unconstitutional.

A state agency that would enforce the law had asked U.S. District Judge Gregory Presnell to put on hold his preliminary injunction stopping the law from being enforced until a trial is held to determine its constitutionality while the state of Florida appeals the injunction. Attorneys for Florida told

the judge that the preliminary injunction should only apply to the Orlando restaurant that sued seeking to get the law ruled unconstitutional and not "nonpar-

ties" to the complaint. The judge rejected that argument, saying any harm to the state of Florida is minimal if the preliminary injunction remains in place,

and that all Floridians are potentially parties since free speech is at stake.

"Plaintiff is not the only party suffering injury as a result of the passage of the Act; it has a chilling effect on all members of society who fall within its reach," Presnell wrote in his order.

The complaint was brought by the owner of a Hamburger Mary's restaurant and bar in Orlando, which regularly hosts drag shows, including family-friendly performances on Sundays that children were invited to attend. The restaurant owner said the law was overbroad, was written vaguely and violated First Amendment rights by chilling speech.

The new law punished ven-

ues for allowing children into "adult live performances." Though it did not mention drag shows specifically, the sponsor of the legislation said it was aimed at those performances. Venues that violated the law faced fines and the possibility of their liquor licenses being suspended or revoked. Individuals could be charged with a misdemeanor crime.

Before announcing his candidacy for the 2024 GOP presidential nomination, DeSantis made anti-LGBTQ+ legislation a large part of his agenda as governor. Other bills he signed would ban gender-affirming care for minors and restrict discussion of personal pronouns in schools. □



Drag performer Velvet LeNore joins dancers on stage during the gala at the Florida Democratic Party's Annual Leadership Blue Weekend at the Fontainebleau Hotel on Miami Beach, Fla., Saturday, July 8, 2023.

Associated Press

Five European countries will extend ban on Ukraine's grain

By MONIKA SCISLOWSKA
Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — Five European Union countries will extend their ban on Ukrainian grain imports to protect their farmers' interests, their agriculture ministers said Wednesday, but food can still move through their land to parts of the world in need after Russia pulled out of a deal safeguarding Black Sea shipments.

The ministers of Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria signed a joint declaration ahead of EU discussions on the matter planned next week in Brussels. The declaration said they support continuing to allow Ukraine's grain to move through their borders by road, rail and river to destinations where it is needed but will keep the import ban to their countries through 2023.

"This coalition is not against anyone, not against Ukraine or the EU, it is in the interest of our farmers," Polish Agriculture Minister Robert Telus said after meeting with his counterparts in Warsaw, where they decided to push the ban beyond a Sept. 15 deadline.

Except for Bulgaria, all the countries border Ukraine, which faced a major blow Monday when Russia pulled out of a breakthrough accord brokered by the U.N. and Turkey to allow Ukrainian food to be shipped through the Black Sea to countries where millions are going hungry. Ukraine is a major exporter of wheat, barley, vegetable oil and corn.

The five agricultural ministers and Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, who met with them, said Ukrainian grain previously got stuck in their countries, leading to a glut that drove down prices for their farmers, and they don't want to see that happen again.

The ministers urged the EU to work out mechanisms that will get Ukrainian grain and other food to their des-



An employee of the Romanian grain handling operator Comvex oversees the unloading of Ukrainian cereals from a barge in the Black Sea port of Constanta, Romania, on June 21, 2022.
Associated Press

tinations without hurting the agricultural industry in transit countries.

"Today the EU should build proper law and infrastructure tools to regulate transport of Ukraine grain in the long term," Telus said.

"We want to help Ukraine in the transit," he said.

EU commissioner for agriculture, Janusz Wojciechowski, a former Polish agriculture minister, said on Twitter in May that some 4.1 million tons of Ukrainian corn, barley and canola grain came to Poland from April 2022 through March 2023, with 3.4 million tons remaining there and only about 700 tons moving through.

Farmers launched protests and the countries passed unilateral bans in April without EU approval, threatening European unity in the face of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The EU later struck a deal allowing the countries to temporarily prohibit some agricultural products from Ukraine and provide farmers more aid. The grain is allowed to move through to other markets in sealed and guarded transports.

Telus said the EU ban has

bought "unexpectedly good effects to us all," saying figures show a doubling of Ukrainian grain moving through Poland this year.

The Ukrainian Grain Association, meanwhile, has pushed to send more grain through the Danube River to neighboring Romania's Black Sea ports, saying it's possible to double monthly exports along that route to 4 million metric tons.

But Cezar Gheorghe, founder of Romanian grain analyst firm AGRIColumn, said that's "not possible."

Between March 2022 and June 2023, some 20 million tons of Ukrainian grain passed through the Romanian ports of Constanta, Galati and Braila the maximum that could be handled, he said.

"Ukraine will need to disburse also through Poland, Hungary, Slovakia it is simple math," Gheorghe said. "We will stand alongside Ukraine, but through our limitations."

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, said Tuesday that she was "deeply concerned about Russia's move to terminate

the Black Sea Grain Initiative," stressing that the "risk is that it brings food insecurity to so many vulnerable countries across the globe."

"The European Union will, with all means, continue to work to ensure that food security for vulnerable people is given," she said.

More than 45 million metric tons of grain, oilseeds and other products have been exported through Europe, von der Leyen said.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative, which was brokered in a bid to end a global food crisis caused by Russia's war in Ukraine, has allowed an additional 32.9 million metric tons to get to the world, according to the U.N.

Von der Leyen stressed that it was "important that the blocking of the Black Sea is stopped" and that exports can continue via that route.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Wednesday that his government is working on solutions to keep exporting through the Black Sea despite Russia pulling its safety guarantees for ships. □

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Police in Kenya open fire on activists protesting new taxes

By EVELYNE MUSAMBI

Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Police in Kenya opened fire on protesters in clashes that left at least 12 people wounded Wednesday as the opposition organized demonstrations calling for the government of President William Ruto to lower the cost of living.

The opposition called for three days of countrywide protests aimed at forcing the president to repeal a finance law imposing new taxes. Ruto had vowed that no protests would take place, saying he would take opposition leader Raila Odinga "head-on."

Four protesters were injured in the Mathare area of the capital, Nairobi, according to a police officer who spoke on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to speak to the media. The Associated Press witnessed one man shot in the shoulder and two others shot in the leg in Mathare.

In Nairobi's Kangemi area, health records worker Alvin Sikuku told the AP that two young men had been brought into the Eagle Nursing Home clinic. "Po-



Police arrest a protester during clashes in the Mathare area of Nairobi, Kenya Wednesday, July 19, 2023.

lice are using live bullets," he said. One man was shot in the back and severely wounded, and the other was shot in the leg. "We don't yet know if they were protesting or just walking by," Sikuku said.

In the city of Nakuru, Nakuru Referral Hospital Medical Superintendent James Waweru confirmed that four people came in with

gunshot wounds, two of them shot in the abdomen, one in the chest and another one in the leg. A fifth person had been cut and wounded.

The Interior Ministry said more than 300 people were arrested during Wednesday's protests and that they will be charged with crimes including looting, destroying property and

assaulting police.

The opposition in a statement condemned the arrests of seven elected leaders and two close associates of Odinga, calling it a "desperate attempt" by the Ruto administration to paralyze the opposition.

Businesses and schools in Nairobi were closed as police used tear gas and water cannons to disperse

protesters.

Demonstrations were reported in several other parts of the country including the western counties of Kisumu, Migori and Kisii where the opposition enjoys huge support.

Police had said the protests were illegal as no permit had been issued, but the right to peaceful protests is enshrined in the Kenyan constitution.

The opposition has said protests would continue Thursday.

Last week's protests killed at least 10 people, according to watchdogs, with a police officer confirming at least six to the AP. Many others were injured, including 53 children who went into shock after tear gas was thrown inside their school compound.

Religious leaders have called for dialogue between the government and the opposition to end the protests. Catholic bishops on Wednesday issued a statement reiterating that "no further blood should be shed" and urged the president to repeal the newly passed Finance Act that has agitated many Kenyans. □

Associated Press

U.K. Prime Minister apologizes for a previous ban on LGBTQ+ people in the military

By SYLVIA HUI

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — U.K. Prime

Minister Rishi Sunak apologized Wednesday for the treatment of gay veterans,

saying that a previous ban on LGBTQ+ people serving in the U.K. military was "an appalling failure of the British state."

The apology came after an independent review published Wednesday estimated that hundreds, if not thousands, of veterans were dismissed or suffered under an official ban on homosexuality in the U.K. armed forces that was enforced until 2000.

"As today's report makes clear, in that period many endured the most horrific sexual abuse and violence, homophobic bullying and harassment, all while bravely serving this coun-

try," Sunak told Parliament. "Today, on behalf of the British state, I apologize."

The report, which was carried out by retired senior judge Terence Etherton, compiled evidence from more than 1,100 veterans. It documented the effects of what it called "an incomprehensible policy of homophobic bigotry in our armed forces." Some of the victims have taken their own lives, while others have attempted suicide, the report said. Veterans' testimonies "give shocking evidence of a culture of homophobia, and of bullying, blackmail and sexual assaults, abusive investiga-

tions into sexual orientation and sexual preference, disgraceful medical examinations, including conversion therapy," the report said.

Some victims said they were stripped of or denied medals they were entitled to, or that they lost their pension rights following their dismissal or discharge. "The survivors have waited for at least 23 years for acknowledgment of what they have suffered, and for justice and restitution," it added. The report also recommended that financial compensation should be made to victims, even if litigation time limits have expired. □



Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak leaves 10 Downing Street to attend the weekly Prime Ministers' Questions session in parliament in London, Wednesday, July 19, 2023.

Associated Press



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Visit the natural bridges of Aruba!

(Oranjestad)—After you've visited the Alto Vista Church, the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and the mini natural pool that is located right next to it, you're next up around the northern coast line must be the **Natural Bridge**. Once the largest natural bridge in the Caribbean, this bridge has been a tourist attraction for many years.

The bridge was formed during thousands of years, cut and crafted by the wild waves that crash into the coral stone walls of the coast. Before its collapse, this bridge measured 30 meters in length and 7 meters in height, making it the biggest natural bridge in the Caribbean at the time. For many years, this site was

also a frequently visited beach, as the bridge had a small opening through which the water would flow into the tiny beach.

Unfortunately in 2005, the bridge collapsed, and the little beach dried up. Despite this, this site remained a tourist attraction, with many visitors walking along the coral cliffs of the bridge to see the spectacular view of the northern coastline and the Caribbean Sea. Visitors can also still visit the souvenir shop on the left of the bridge entrance.

While the natural bridge no longer is functional, there is now a smaller natural bridge very close. This bridge is often called the "Baby Bridge" or "Daughter Bridge". □



Current state of the Natural Bridge



The Baby Natural Bridge



The Natural Bridge pre-collapse

Aruba to me



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Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from **Carol Miller**

She wrote to us saying; "Aruba to me is...first and foremost it's the people, sugary sands, perfect weather, delicious tap water, warm clear sea and the feeling of coming home."

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! □

Barbie Movie Premiere at Caribbean Cinemas: A Pink-Tastic Extravaganza!

Get ready to immerse yourself in a world of pink and glam as the Barbie Movie Premiere at the Caribbean Cinemas – Paseo Herencia. This highly anticipated event promises an enchanting experience filled with exclusive promotions, trendy fashion, delectable drinks, and unique offerings that will delight Barbie fans of all ages at Paseo Herencia.

Pink Deals July 20 - 23

Carmen Steffens, a renowned fashion boutique, invites you to discover the complete Barbie Outfit. Step into the spotlight with trendy pink clothing and accessories that you won't find anywhere else. Enjoy

an exclusive 30% discount on the Barbie Collection, and indulge in up to 50% off on their regular collection. Don't miss this opportunity to dress like a true fashion icon!

Join ALDO for an extraordinary event as they unveil their exclusive Barbie Collection. Experience the magic of fashion and imagination on Saturday, where you'll discover a stunning lineup of Barbie-inspired footwear and accessories. Indulge in sips, treats, and entertainment while exploring the collection that perfectly captures Barbie's iconic glamour.

TGI Fridays knows that a

pink drink is the perfect companion for this magical occasion. Gather your friends and enjoy a delightful Cosmopolitan, available all day from July 19th to July 23rd. Sip and celebrate the Barbie Movie Premiere in style!

Up-style your outfit with beautiful pink braids. Visit Braids To Go, where you can get pink braids starting from \$3.50. Let your hair shine with a touch of Barbie-inspired pink!

Calling all pink lovers! Beach N Flips, Emoceen, and BKS Aruba have a special treat for you. From July 21st to July 23rd, enjoy a fantastic 15% discount on

all pink items.

Delicia's Jewelry is offering an exclusive deal for those looking to add a touch of sparkle to their Barbie-inspired look. Get a pink belly piercing for only AWG 25 and add some extra dazzle to your ensemble.

Lentino Artisan is your go-to destination for pink bags and accessories. Enjoy discount of 10-15% on all their pink collection. Elevate your style with their exquisite craftsmanship and elegant designs.

At Vadavas, everything

pink will be \$=fl. Embrace the magic of Barbie and indulge in a shopping spree where pink reigns supreme.

Don't miss out on these extraordinary pink-tastic promotions available exclusively during the Barbie Movie Premiere. Mark your calendars and join us for this unforgettable event filled with fashion, fun, and fantasy! Visit our website www.paseoherencia.com to learn more.

For movie tickets, visit the Caribbean Cinemas ticket booth or website to reserve your seat.□

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic—but important—information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Emergency services

Even though most people don't even want to think about having to contact emergency services—especially not while on their vacation, it is still important to know what number to dial in case of the unlikely event of an accident or severe incident.

Police: 100
Police Tipline: 11141
Ambulance: 911
Fire Dept: 115
Oranjestad: HOH hospital: +297-527-4000
San Nicolas: ImSan: +297-527-8833

Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Taxis

Prices for taxi fair are set by the Department of Public Traffic and are based on destination rather than mileage. Most taxis can take up to five passengers, but this may vary depending on the vehicle. Taxis are pretty much always available and you can ever hire one for \$45 an hour.

Safety

Aruba is one of the safest islands in the Caribbean, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.□



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Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Marriott's Surf Club

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure to recognize Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba. This lovely couple was respectively honored with a certificate acknowledging their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honor certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three honoring levels are as follows:

Distinguished Visitor	(10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
Goodwill Ambassador	(20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
Emerald Ambassador	(35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba Mr. Chris & Mrs. Heather Zirke from Kentucky, United States.

Ms. Kimberley Richardson representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of the Marriott's Surf Club bestowed the certificate to the honorees, presented them with memorable gifts, and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their best-loved vacation destination and as their home-away-from-home.

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to Mr. & Mrs. Zirke for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island".

Top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by Mr. &



Mrs. Zirke were:
Aruba's nice sandy beaches.

Aruba's warm weather.
Aruba's friendly people.
"The food is delicious!"

"Being able to spend time with our family." □

Aruba to me



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Papillon: The butterfly effect of magnificent food



PALM BEACH — Do you remember the film “Papillon” starring Steve McQueen? Papillon restaurant is the island’s example where ‘life imitates art.’ The décor, especially the restrooms, was inspired by the movie. For more than a decade this restaurant has built a reputation with the fusion of classic French cuisine, Dutch and Caribbean flavors. Welcome in the world of wonders where ambiance, taste and service come together and you feel you are being welcomed in the home of the owner and her team.

“We find it really important that our guests have fun; can relax while listening to live music while their taste buds are being tickled by France, The Netherlands and the Caribbean. We offer a unique fusion of dishes and a night not to forget,” says owner Tina. As our special guest you can choose to dine inside our heartwarming airconditioned restaurant or we also offer outside dining on a cozy, elegant terrace with great ambiance of the surroundings. Perfect setting for an enjoyable time people watching while sipping on a delicious cocktail.

Fresh oysters, caviar and wild boar

You are on vacation, life is to enjoy! If you want something special, a different flow than the usual, then Papillon is the place to go. Foodies are in heaven here with classic French dishes such as Foie Gras, Frog Legs, fresh Oysters coming in on a weekly basis from Holland, Escargots, Dover Sole à la Meunière flown in from Europe and filleted at the table, Duck Breast seared on the skin, roasted and braised Lamb in Balashi beer and slow braised Wild Boar Shank. Do not leave without trying the exclusive recommendation: Caviar! All of this combined with an extensive wine list from around the world makes Papillon a must-do on your Aruban vacation.



Let the music play!

Another reason to visit us is our Live Entertainment Schedule all through the week.

Get all cozy and warmed up on Sundays and Mondays by Marisella and her enchanting acoustic tunes accompanied by percussion only.

On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, Jairo will give you a real Saxophone treat while on Wednesday you can sit back, relax and enjoy your dinner while DJ Jason brings you the most smooth jazz and lounge music for a dreamy night.

The musicians interact with the guests & requests can be sent in. The live tunes definitely add to the experience.

Vegetarian vibes present

Impressive vegetarian/vegan dishes are set up especially for the guests by the chef and Meredith from Vegan Aruba. “We offer vegan choices that are really good and tasty. Our daily soup is always vegan too”. What are you waiting for, make sure to pay a visit to this elegant yet laid-back restaurant while on Aruba. You are most welcome!

Chef’s Garden 6 course dinner by Papillon

Our one of a kind executive chef Juan Ludena gets extra creative outside the kitchen of Papillon Restaurant. Serving a 6 course surprise menu featuring his International flavors and creativity with refined dishes, chef Juan Ludena is determined to give you a night to remember. Wine pairing is optional. The chef’s secret garden is located in a local replica of the Aruba traditional ‘cunucu’ house. The tropical garden is the setting for a magical in-home private dining experience.

For more information about this magnificent option, please send us an email or ask our wait staff. Papillon Restaurant is located at The Village across the Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino and within walking distance of all other major hotels.

Make your reservation today at:

info@papillonaruba.com

or call/WhatsApp + 00297 6995400

Open Daily: 5pm – 10.00pm – Early Bird from 5pm – 7pm

For all menus and specials visit the website: www.papillonaruba.com.

Unique fauna of Aruba

For a small island, Aruba sure has a lot of unique treasures. Among these, we have some subspecies of animals that are unique to our island. These have evolved to perfectly adapt to our desert climate and make Aruba their home. At the same time, they are part of what makes Aruba truly one of a kind.

Cascabel (rattlesnake, *Crotalus durissus unicolor*)

According to the Arikok National Park, Aruba knows two kinds of snakes, the Santanero and the Cascabel. The cascabel belongs to the rattlesnake family. The cascabel is the only venomous snake from Aruba. It has a length of 65cm to 100cm, and is about 4 to 5cm wide. Its color varies from light brown to grey-brown, and its underbelly is white. On its back there are marks that are a little darker, in the shape of diamonds.

Its reproduction is oviparous, meaning the offspring can hatch from their eggs just before, during or immediately after laying.

The cascabel lives mainly in the Arikok National Park. It likes to live in dark places, and is thus found hidden among the limestone rocks and under stones. As a defense mechanism, the cascabel uses its rattle as a warning, and it is not an aggressive animal.

The cascabel feeds on lizards, small mammals such as rats and mice. It paralyzes or kills its prey with its venom, which is injected through a bite. The en-

emies of the cascabel are donkeys, goats, humans and cars. Humans are the biggest enemy of the cascabel, as they kill them and destroy their habitat for urbanization.

Shoco (burrowing owl, *Athene cunicularia arubensis*)

The shoco is a small bird which is seldom seen. They are active during the day but are more active later in the day and at night for hunting. These owls have very good night vision and very good hearing. The shoco is the national symbol of Aruba.

The shoco has about 20cm of length, and the females are slightly heavier than the males. They are light brown in color, with many white spots. The belly of the Shoco is either white or light brown, and the shoco has striking yellow eyes. Its beak is yellow/green. Young owls do not have white spots and are lighter in color.

The nest of the shoco is a burrow in the ground. If the shoco cannot find a burrow, it will dig one in soft soil. The shoco lays one or two eggs every other day until all the eggs are laid – a shoco can lay up to four eggs. The first owlets hatch after three to four weeks. The shoco owl takes care of the owlets for three months until they leave the nest. Only a few owlets survive.

The owls dig burrows in the ground with low grass vegetation. An owl can live up to nine years.

Its defense mechanism is

simply to fly away or retreat to its burrows. They eat mostly insects, mice and lizards, and the main threats to their survival are boas – an invasive species introduced by humans as pets – and humans through destruction of their habitat.

Prikichi (parakeet, *Aratinga pertinax*)

The Prikichi is the national bird of Aruba. On Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao, parakeets can be found, but each of the three islands has a different breed. The Yellow-shouldered Amazon parakeet that we have on Aruba is also found along the coast of Venezuela. Unfortunately, there is interbreeding between the breeds due to cage birds from, for example, Curaçao being released on Aruba. The parakeet population on Aruba is in danger due to extensive deforestation occurring on the island because of the growing population.

The prikichi weighs between 90 to 100 grams. It has a greenish-brown head with some yellow around the eye. The back and wings of the parakeet are dark green, and the underside of the body is a lighter shade of green. There is also a bit of blue in the wings. The parakeet's beak is gray/black.

Parakeets often use termite nests as breeding sites. Parakeets are found in all natural environments (mondi) of the island. It defends itself by flying away and loud cries. Parakeets eat seeds from the pods of the Kwihi tree, Divi Divi, and columnar cactus. They also consume natural fruits. Its main predators are boa constrictors, humans.

Conew (cottontail rabbit, *Sylvilagus floridanus nigronuchalis*)

The Eastern Cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) was probably brought over to the island by Indian settlers thousands of years ago as a source of food. This rabbit, locally known as Conew, has spread all over the island and has become



part of our ecosystem. The very adaptable Conew can live in a wide variety of habitats, including Aruba's xeric scrublands, where it typically grazes on weeds and grasses.

The Aruban Conew has a brownish grey color and a distinctive white belly. This white fur extends to the bottom of the tail which becomes visible as the rabbit runs. These rabbits can grow up to approximately 40 centimeters in length over their short lifespan of 3 years. Cottontail rabbits reach reproductive maturity when they are just 2 to 3 months old. A female rabbit, called a doe, finds a suitable nest spot under a shrub or rocks and lines it with fur. She can have an average of 3 to 4 litters per year averaging 5 young each. The doe only visits her young once or twice a day to nurse her babies for a period of 2 to 3 weeks. The young reach independence at 4 to 5 weeks.

The Aruban Conew is an endangered species and

protected by Aruban law. The Conew is thought to have drastically declined due to an increase in human activities, habitat fragmentation and predation by the invasive Boa constrictor as well as feral cats and dogs. However, recently there seem to be more rabbit sightings in rural and wilderness areas and also in the National Park. This could be linked to a recent decline of the invasive Boa population after the long period of drought. As the Conew can reproduce very quickly, a short break in predation pressure can lead to a fast increase of rabbits. Sadly, the Boas are back on the rise again with the truly wet rainy seasons we have recently experienced. This could cause a new decline in the Conew population that was just starting to recover.

These are but a few of Aruba's beautiful inhabitant, which we must all contribute to protect. For more information, visit <https://www.arubanationalpark.org/main/flora-fauna/>



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 45 Smell

1 Rainbow shapes

5 Lists of candidates

11 Yard part

12 Roman orator

13 Clip contents

14 Bird sanctuary

15 Didn't go

17 List-shortening abbr.

18 Christina of "Sleepy Hollow"

22 Velvety flower

24 Berate

25 Outdated

26 Cattle call

27 Convenes

30 Shoe parts

32 Brake, for one

33 "Patience — virtue"

34 Won back

38 Orbit point

41 Together, in music

42 Red Cross headquarters

43 Richard of "Chicago"

44 Wine expert

DOWN

1 Miles off

2 Colosseum

3 Praised

4 Some ermines

5 Check-out act

6 Sources of bile

7 With a low pH

8 Caffeine source

9 Blunder

10 Kind of milk

16 Frozen over

19 Was in charge

20 Hoof sound

21 Altar exchange

22 Splendor

23 Out of the wind

28 Goal

29 Jacket part

30 Through

31 Crumbly cheese

35 Clock part

36 Franc's replacement

37 Some bucks

38 IRS employee

39 Casserole bit

40 Switch settings

MOBS	SVELTE
ABUT	AIRIER
PITY	LOOTER
SET	PALS
ERODE	GAB
ACRID	TBONE
POCO	ULNA
PLUTO	ARDEN
SAP	RHINE
ICED	NAP
APACHE	ARGO
DEVOID	LOON
STANDS	EDGY

Yesterday's answer

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11				12					
13				14					
15				16					
17				18		19	20	21	
22	23			24					
25				26					
27			28	29	30	31			
32				33					
34				35				36	37
38	39	40				41			
42						43			
44						45			

7-20

AXYDI.BAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

7-20

CRYPTOQUOTE

F D F T L H R Z B O O U U I .

F D F T L H R Z B O Q X O Z P X W

R X A A F B M S F H K F F B H R F

Q U B H R M U V E J B F X B I X J O J M H .

— F F B B L R X B

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: OUR DEEPEST FEARS ARE LIKE DRAGONS. GUARDING OUR DEEPEST TREASURES. — RAINER MARIA RILKE

Chinese e-retailer Temu files lawsuit in U.S. against rival Shein



Pages from the Shein website, left, and from the Temu site, right, are shown in this photo, in New York, Friday, June 23, 2023.

Associated Press

By ZEN SOO

AP Technology Writer

HONG KONG (AP) — Chinese e-commerce retailer Temu has filed a lawsuit in Massachusetts accusing its rival Shein of violating U.S. antitrust law by preventing garment makers from working with it. Temu, which is owned by popular Chinese e-commerce site Pinduoduo Inc., is alleging that Shein has compelled clothing manufacturers to submit to unfair supply chain arrangements preventing them from working with Temu after it entered the U.S. market in 2022.

Shein (SHE-in) and Temu (TEE-mu) are fast-rising online shopping platforms. Shein has grabbed the largest share of the fast fashion market in the U.S., at over 50%, according to Temu's complaint. Temu is the most downloaded app in the U.S., according to the website data.ai, formerly App Annie, which tracks app rankings. It offers everything from apparel to household goods at similarly competitive

prices.

"Shein has engaged in a campaign of threats, intimidation, false assertions of infringement, and attempts to impose baseless punitive fines and has forced exclusive dealing arrangements on clothing manufacturers," according to the complaint Temu filed on July 14 with the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts. In an emailed statement, Temu said that Shein also punished merchants that worked with Temu by imposing "extrajudicial fines" and forced retailers to assign their intellectual property rights to Shein, which could then seek to enforce these rights against those who also operate on Temu. "For a long time, we have exercised significant restraint and refrained from pursuing legal actions. However, Shein's escalating attacks leave us no choice but to take legal measures to defend our rights and the rights of those merchants doing business on Temu, as well as the consumers' rights to

a wide variety of affordable products," the retailer said in the statement. Shein did not immediately respond to AP with a comment, though it previously said that the case was "without merit" and that the firm would defend itself against the allegations. Earlier, Shein sued Temu in Illinois, asserting that it engaged in deceptive business practices and created impostor pages that violated copyrights and trademarks.

China's regulators have cracked down on the widespread practice by internet firms there of forcing retailers, brands and suppliers to work exclusively with them. □

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1 BR WK 27 room # 1329 \$ 4,5K
1 BR WK 27 room # 1427 \$4,5 K
1 BR WK 27 room # 1230 \$ 3,6K
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Am I crossing picket lines if I see a movie?'

'By The Associated Press

You watch movies. You watch TV. And now you're wondering how the dual Hollywood strikes a pitched battle with actors and writers on one side, and studios and streaming services on the other will affect you. We have answers.

Do the strikes mean "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer" aren't coming out?

They and all other summer releases are still on track! Many flashy premieres have been canceled, however, or dramatically scaled down.

Am I crossing the picket line by seeing one of those movies?

No, the unions have not asked fans to boycott productions, and are quick to make that explicit. Instead, the guilds have asked supporters who aren't members to post on social media and donate to community funds.

Should I cancel Netflix, MAX or the 16 other streaming services I subscribe to if I want to show support?

Nope, there's been no consumer boycott of any kind called yet. Some guild members have said watching their programs on streaming services if they're still on there actually helps make their cases to the studios' bargaining arm, the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television



Picketers carry signs outside Disney studios on Monday, July 17, 2023, in Burbank, Calif.

Associated Press

Producers. When will I stop being able to watch new movies and shows?

That's the big question: When will the pipeline dry up? There aren't clear answers. The impact of the writers strike has so far been felt most acutely in the world of television; now, the actors strike has halted the bulk of film production. Your favorite broadcast shows like "Abbott Elementary" definitely aren't coming back by early fall, regardless of whether the strikes are settled by then. Ditto for streaming favorites like "Stranger Things." International productions

may be able to fill the gap. As for movies, there's still a steady stream on the horizon.

I have a ticket to a play starring my favorite actor. Do the strikes mean the show is going to be canceled?

No, stage actors in plays and musicals are governed by the Actors' Equity Association. A different union altogether, Equity has expressed solidarity with SAG-AFTRA and many actors are members of both unions. But Broadway dances on. I love the Emmys will they still air in September?

The Emmys are still set for

Monday, Sept. 18. But history shows that awards shows that proceed during strikes turn out to be bleak affairs. And Emmy campaigning will certainly be affected. SAG-AFTRA and WGA members aren't allowed to take part in "for your consideration" events under their strike notices and they wouldn't be able to accept awards for projects produced by struck companies. Can actors still post to social media?

Yes! Actors (and writers) do not have to fade gently into that good night while they're on strike. Social media actually helps boost

the visibility of their cause, and you'll see many guild members posting content with bespoke strike-related hashtags. But actors aren't supposed to promote any of their projects in the pipeline while on strike, so it's unlikely that you'll see a sea of #barbie and #oppenheimer hashtags from their star-studded casts.

The SAG-AFTRA strike website had this advice for members wondering if they were allowed to promote themselves (or post #spon): "Yes! Promote yourself as an artist, a fashion icon, a union activist, a commercial actor, and a proud SAG-AFTRA member. You can also promote brands using our groundbreaking Influencer Agreement or start a podcast."

It's my dream to go to Comic-Con will that be affected this year?

Honestly, yes. Several show and movie panels have already been canceled and the strike notice forbids SAG-AFTRA members from promoting any work made by struck companies even if those projects were long in the past. There are certain exceptions that would allow members to attend some conventions, but the bottom line is that major events like San Diego's Comic-Con will indeed be diminished during the strikes. □

Patterson, Atwood among thousands of writers urging AI companies to honor copyrights

NEW YORK (AP) — James Patterson, Suzanne Collins and Margaret Atwood are among thousands of writers endorsing an open letter from the Authors Guild urging AI companies to obtain permission before incorporating copyrighted work into their technologies.

"Millions of copyrighted books, articles, essays, and poetry provide the 'food' for AI systems, endless meals for which there has been no bill," the letter reads in

part. "You're spending billions of dollars to develop AI technology. It is only fair that you compensate us for using our writings, without which AI would be banal and extremely limited."

The letter is addressed to OpenAI, Meta, Microsoft and other AI producers. The Guild announced Tuesday that other signers include the Pulitzer Prize-winning novelists Jennifer Egan, Michael Chabon and Louise Erdrich, as well as authors

Jonathan Franzen, Celeste Ng, Nora Roberts and Ron Chernow.

"If creators aren't compensated fairly, they can't afford to create," Roberts said in a statement. "If writers aren't paid to write, they can't afford to write. Human beings create and write stories human beings read. We're not robots to be programmed, and AI can't create human stories without taking from human stories already written." □



Author James Patterson appears at an event to promote his joint novel with former President Bill Clinton, "The President is Missing," in New York on June 5, 2018, left, and Author Margaret Atwood appears at the Glamour Women of the Year Awards in New York on Nov. 11, 2019.

Associated Press

LaMelo Ball says he signed 5-year extension with Hornets

By STEVE REED
AP Sports Writer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — LaMelo Ball could've tried to force his way out of Charlotte in hopes of landing with an established NBA playoff contender in the next few years.

Instead, the 2022 All-Star point guard decided to embrace his current situation with the struggling Hornets by signing a five-year deal earlier this month that will pay him up to \$260 million. In so doing, he became first Hornets player to sign a rookie max contract extension, giving Charlotte a cornerstone piece to build around.

Ball said he chose to remain in Charlotte because he's comfortable living there and believes in what the Hornets are trying to create.

"Where we at, I feel like we are all growing together," Ball said Wednesday in his first news conference since signing the contract. "I think it's just a great position and I think we are all going the right way now." Ball said the decision to stay wasn't tough.



Charlotte Hornets guard LaMelo Ball brings the ball upcourt during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Detroit Pistons in Charlotte, N.C., Monday, Feb. 27, 2023.

Associated Press

"All my years here I've had a good time," Ball said. "Life wasn't bad. The basketball aspect, if that's not really going well, then you want to just live your life and have fun. You want to be living well, and in Charlotte I'm doing that. It all just felt like a great choice." General manager Mitch

Kupchak said keeping a player like Ball is a big step for the Hornets.

He thinks Charlotte is on the verge of snapping a streak of seven straight seasons without making the playoffs, the longest active streak in the league.

"We have not had great success as a team, which

is something that will change," Kupchak said. "To have a player like him back with us, just to come back to us, it's exciting." Kupchak said the team's goal has been to build through the draft. Aside from re-signing Ball and Miles Bridges, the Hornets weren't very active

in the free agent market. That's largely by design, as Kupchak wants to give younger players a chance to develop. He said big-name free agents will want to come to Charlotte once the organization begins winning more games.

"I'm not thinking we necessarily have to add more talent," Kupchak said. "I think the talent we need to get where we want to go is already in the system. Now it's just going to take a little time to get everybody up to speed and get to where we want to get to. I don't think there's a major area that needs to be addressed."

The big contract certainly adds pressure on Ball, the No. 3 overall pick in the 2021 draft. But the laid-back 21-year-old said that is something he's never worried about on the court and he isn't about to start now.

"Growing up, my pops always said pressure was finding your next meal, finding where to sleep, stuff like that," Ball said of his father, LaVar Ball. "I'm pretty much blessed. □"

Kentucky Derby winner Mage returns for \$1M Haskell at Monmouth Park

OCEANPORT, N.J. (AP) — Kentucky Derby winner Mage is expected to race for the first time since finishing third in the Preakness when the 3-year-old colt takes on seven rivals in the \$1 million Haskell Invitational at Monmouth Park on Saturday.

Mage drew the No. 4 post position on Wednesday and was made the co-second choice behind 5-2 morning-line favorite Arabian Knight, who will be looking to give trainer Bob Baffert his 10th win in the 1 1/8-mile race that is the highlight of the meet at this New Jersey shore track.

Tapit Trice, the Todd Pletcher-trainer colt who finished third in the Belmont Stakes and seventh in the Derby, also is 3-1 along with Mage. Ramiro Restrepo, the co-owner of Mage, said the

owners have been planning to race the colt in the Travers at Saratoga next month.

"We're just trying to plot the best course of action through the summer to the

Travers," he said after the draw. "We thought the Haskell, with its prestige and tradition, being Grade 1 and the five weeks out to the Travers landed perfectly on the calendar. It just

made sense to run in both Grade 1s."

The winner of this race will earn a spot in the Breeders' Cup Classic in November at Santa Anita Park in California, where Baffert is based. He also seems to like it in New Jersey. He has won this race a record nine times, the last one with Authentic in 2020.

"The Haskell has always meant a lot to us. It's a very important race," he said. "A lot of tradition. A lot of great horses have won that race. I love Monmouth Park." Arabian Knight, who is undefeated in two career starts, has not raced since winning a Grade 3 stakes in Arkansas in late January.

"He's doing well. He's pretty fit. I don't particularly like the 8 (post)," Baffert said. "I was hoping to be in the middle somewhere. We

freshened him up. He's doing really well. I think he's ready for the mile-and-an-eighth. I feel good about the way he's going into the race. I think conditioning-wise, he's ready for it."

Geaux Rocket Ride drew the No. 1 post position and was made the 9-2 fourth choice. Mike Smith is listed to ride in the race that is scheduled to start at 5:47 p.m. ET and be televised by NBC Sports.

The rest of the field in post position order with colt, jockey and odds is: Awesome Strong, Jose Batista, 30-1; Salute the Stars, Joel Rosario, 8-1; Mage, Javier Castellano, 3-1; Tapit Trice, Luis Saez, 3-1; Howgreatisnate, Paco Lopez, 20-1; Extra Anejo, Tyler Gaffalione, 5-1 and Arabian Knight, John Velazquez, 5-2. □



Mage (8), with Javier Castellano aboard, wins the 149th running of the Kentucky Derby horse race at Churchill Downs Saturday, May 6, 2023, in Louisville, Ky.

Associated Press

Vingegaard takes huge lead at Tour after dropping Pogacar

COURCHEVEL, France (AP) — After destroying Tadej Pogacar in the race against the clock, Jonas Vingegaard dealt him the coup de grace in the Tour de France with an impressive display in the mountains on Wednesday. Vingegaard is now well on course to bring the yellow jersey to Paris for a second straight year after the Danish rider took a huge lead over his main rival. The defending champion dropped Pogacar in the last big stage in the Alps to increase his overall lead to seven minutes and 35 seconds. Barring any big crash, he looks set to win his second Tour title. "Now to have more than



Denmark's Jonas Vingegaard, wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey, follows teammate Netherlands' Wilco Kelderman as they climb Col de la Loze pass during the seventeenth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 166 kilometers (103 miles) with start in Saint-Gervais Mont-Blanc and finish in Courchevel, France, Wednesday, July 19, 2023.

Associated Press

seven minutes is just really incredible," Vingegaard said. "Of course the Tour de France is not over yet, I'm sure Tadej will try something on the last three stages. We're not in Paris yet." Vingegaard finished the 17th stage in fourth place, almost six minutes before an exhausted Pogacar crossed the finish line. The race ends in the French capital with a largely ceremonial stage on Sunday. There is just one tough stage remaining before then on Saturday in the Alsace region, with the peloton facing a total of 3,600 meters of climbing. But with such a big gap between the Tour's main contenders, it's unlikely to have an impact in the fight for the yellow jersey. "We are in a good spot now," Vingegaard said. Pogacar, a two-time champion who was dethroned by Vingegaard last year, lost contact about 16 kilometers (10 miles) from the finish at the ski resort of Courchevel. The punishing trek had been dubbed the Queen Stage of this year's Tour because of its daunting profile. The last of four climbs was a 28.4-kilometer (17.6-mile) slog up Col de la Loze, close to the uphill finish. A day after Vingegaard destroyed the field in the race's time trial, Pogacar did not find the strength to attack and got dropped in the monster climb. His teammate Marc Soler stayed with him to try and pace him back, in vain. The day had started on a sour note for Pogacar, who crashed just a few kilometers into the 166-kilometer (103-mile) ride. The Slovenian leader of the UAE Team Emirates fell off at a moderate speed on an uphill section near the foot of the Col des Saies after apparently touching the wheel of a rider. Pogacar was quickly back on his bike and continued racing to rejoin the main contenders before a group of breakaway riders moved away from the pack. □



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